

History of Revolutionary Action (2010 – 2019)

Rev Dia

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In 2020, our team will be 15 years old. On February 13, 2005, Revolutionary Action emerged as the Belarusian center of the Russian anarchist organization Autonomous Action. First, the organization was formed in Minsk. During this time, our movement has experienced many cycles of prosperity and decline, but in spite of everything, we continue to exist and develop.

The history of the organization up to 2010 is published on the website of RD Belarus. For the upcoming anniversary of the Revolutionary Action, we decided to update the history of the movement from 2010 to 2019.

2010 — 2014. Resumption of the movement after the 2010 repressions

After the 2010 crackdown, the movement was almost crushed. Former connections were broken, activity was paralyzed. On the shoulders of activists who managed to avoid repression, a difficult task fell: to rebuild the movement from scratch and at the same time not to fall under the pressure of the repressive apparatus.

In the experience of defeats, in 2010 anarchists began to take a particularly careful view of conspiracy and security, which is now considered the activist standard. It was obvious that the Belarusian repressive apparatus would gain momentum and punish for any mistake.

From 2010 to 2013, the organization's website published news mostly at the local and international levels. Their content includes social and economic issues, as well as information about anarchist political prisoners. Only at the end of 2013 did street activity begin to resume. In early 2014, several symbolic actions were organized in Minsk and Gomel. Also, street agitation resumed.

In the spring of 2014, anarchists launched a campaign against the holding of the Ice Hockey World Championship in the Republic of Belarus. The anarchists focused on the reckless spending of the budget on the organization of the championship. More than 30 people were imprisoned on fabricated charges by the FSB, some of whom were arrested immediately after their release for previous sentences. This was done so that protests against the dictatorship would not spoil the guests' impressions. The repressive apparatus also began to respond to the revival of activity.

On the eve of the championship, many oppositionists and anarchists received administrative arrests on fictitious charges. During this period, anarchists also paid attention to pro-Russian influence in Belarus. In particular, in Brest, the building of the Russian Center of Science and Culture was covered with black paint.

In December 2014, anarchists held the first illegal collective picket in 3 years in Minsk. It was associated with the introduction of new taxes and the deteriorating economic situation of the country's citizens. The anarchists saw the transfer of budget control to society as an alternative. This picket caused a new wave of repression against the movement. But they could not stop the activity of the anarchists.

2015. Development of the movement in Ukraine

In 2015, the Ukrainian branch of "Revolutionary Action" was launched. Since then, our organization has become international. It was also difficult to develop it in Ukraine at that time, although the movement of Ukrainian anarchists was much larger than it is now.

During the Maidan, the anarchists were disorganized and unable to compete effectively with the right-wing movement. In the May Day rally in 2015, which was attended by about 300 activists, there was a clash with the far right. Although the anarchists had a numerical advantage, the far right successfully thwarted the event. This situation has once again exposed the urgent problems of the movement.

After May Day, the far-right continued to actively block opponents and attack anarchists. Literally a few years after the Maidan, all of the former anarchist organizations (RKAS, Direct Action, AST) fell into disrepair or disappeared altogether. In general, the movement lost its numbers. In such a difficult situation of complete domination of the far right on the streets, we had to build a Ukrainian anarchist group.

Our tasks were specific. First, to promote the creation of an active and disciplined organization that would systematically conduct anarchist agitation and struggle, to promote social anarchism as opposed to the subcultural one, and to form a strong “backbone” of activists. And we started working on their implementation.

Anarchists began to organize attacks on the far right, took part in social conflicts related to buildings, conducted regular street propaganda raids, etc. As a result, the movement began to develop slowly but surely in Ukraine.

2015–2017. Intensification of the movement in Belarus

After a long decline, the movement in Belarus was able to resume its activities. During 2015–2017, anarchists held several illegal marches and pickets in Brest, Minsk and Baranovichi.

The agitation spread regularly. It was related to the social and economic problems of Belarusian society: rising taxes, army conscription or police brutality. The most active at that time were groups of activists from Brest, Minsk and Grodno.

In 2015, anarchists blocked the road in Minsk. It was a rally of solidarity with political prisoner Mikola Dziadok, convicted in 2010.

At the same time, actions were published on the RD website, where activists threw smoke grenades at the buildings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Investigative Committee, using paint to damage billboards with state propaganda. One of the most high-profile actions was the painting of the Bilteleradiocompany building, which activists linked to constant lies on state media.

In the summer of 2017, anarchists burned Molotov cocktails to advertise the Bailiffs’ Service in Ivatsevichi. A criminal case was later opened on this fact. Two suspects were detained. In response to the actions and the increase in the audience of the organization’s media resources, the Belarusian authorities blocked its website and the Vkontakte group. Many printed materials were included in the list of extremist ones.

2017. Protests against the Decree №3

At the end of February 2017, the deadline for payment of the tax stipulated by Decree No. 3 of the President of the Republic of Belarus, better known as the “Decree on Parasites”, officially called Decree No. 3 “On Prevention of Social Exclusion”, expired.

This document establishes the obligation of Belarusian citizens who did not participate in the financing of public expenditures or participated in less than 183 calendar days in the previous year to pay the state a fee of 20 basic units. The tax caused dissatisfaction among Belarusian citizens, resulting in a wave of protests in the country, in which anarchists proved to be a very organized force.

At the end of February, one of the streets of Minsk was blocked, which anarchists walked through with pyrotechnics and the banner "*The official is the main parasite.*" As a result, from the beginning of the year, anarchists began to spread propaganda under this slogan in various cities. Thus, the activists drew attention to the financial situation of citizens. They say that the burden on the country's budget is not created by people who lost their jobs due to rising unemployment, but by an excessively large administrative apparatus.

One of the central events of the protest was the march in Brest. It took place on March 5 near the City Executive Committee building as another protest against Decree G3. It was led by a group of anarchists under black flags and with the banner "*The official is the main parasite.*" The anarchists delivered several speeches into a megaphone and gave the opportunity to willing protesters to speak. Subsequently, a column of 1,000 to 1,500 people, along with anarchists, marched under Soviet slogans and blocked Masherov Avenue. The action ended with a picket near the Central Department Store building.

On March 13, we began calling for protests in a number of Belarusian cities. They were to take place on March 18–19. As a result, the rallies took place in only five cities and gathered a total of 200 to 500 people. This relatively low number of protesters can be explained by the refusal of most opposition media to spread the anarchist call. After that we realized that we need to create and develop our own media projects.

A key anarchist rally on March 25, Freedom Day in Minsk, was brutally suppressed by security forces. However, many anarchists were preventively detained the day before. Despite the fact that the authorities managed to stop the wave of protests, the demonstrators were still able to postpone the adoption of the "Decree on the Darmoid".

We have also developed a full-fledged application for Android to bypass the lock. In it you can download books from our library in a convenient form and read the latest news. And view the file from the site of Banda Luka.

2018 — 2019. Repression in Ukraine

In the first years after the Maidan, political protest movements in Ukraine were almost not persecuted. However, the authorities needed to strengthen themselves as they began to attack the anarchist movement again.

In general, the persecution began on October 12, 2017, when a wave of searches of houses and interrogations of Autonomous Resistance activists took place in Lviv. On January 28, 2018, during the legal picket of activists of the eco-platform, mass detentions of its participants took place.

In Ukraine, security forces are actively cooperating with right-wing movements in persecuting political opponents, trying to discredit activists with the stigma of "Kremlin Agents."

In December 2018, searches took place in 4 cities of Ukraine in one day. The SBU does not shy away from KGB methods: there are cases when activists were beaten during interrogations. In

general, many measures were taken in Ukraine against the anarchist movement. In particular, the forcible deportation of the Belarusian political prisoner Frantskevich, detention at rallies and searches in Odessa.

We were not surprised by the beginning of repressions in Ukraine. This is the nature of the state: it tries to suppress dissent that it is unable to control. Unfortunately, many Ukrainian activists still think that legalism and openness can protect them. In fact, openness only facilitates the work of the repressive apparatus.

Therefore, another of our tasks is to promote a culture of security and anonymity as opposed to legalism. Ukraine has a much weaker repressive apparatus than Belarus. Instead, it spends less resources searching for anarchists. We have made sure that security pressure can be avoided effectively and for a long time by following security precautions.

2018 — 2019. A new wave of repression in Belarus

After the protests, the state organized a new wave of repression against the anarchists. However, activists continued to conduct campaign raids and organized several international campaigns.

For example, promotions dedicated to the First of May or the growth of utility tariffs. The latter took place in three countries: Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Supporters of the Revolutionary Action and the Russian organization People's Self-Defense took part.

In 2018, Brest anarchists took an active part in protests against the battery plant, blocking the route. In 2019, amid growing dissatisfaction with conscription, an uncoordinated picket against the new law "On Postponements" took place in the middle of the city center in Brest.

In general, the overall street activity decreased compared to the period of 2016–2017. But it should be noted that the decline in political activity in Belarus was observed at the level of society as a whole.

After the success of the anarchists in the "parasite protests", the authorities began to repress even the slightest protests. In Stolín, a criminal case was opened against a young anarchist for spreading propaganda in the form of leaflets and stencils. In addition, when anarchist agitation broke out in the Stolín area, local security forces went out of their way to find and accuse anyone.

For example, people were detained among subcultural youth — the musician was taken to the forest, threatened to shoot his knee and put a firearm in his back. Not to mention a few searches. We will remind, all this because of anarchist leaflets and inscriptions.

On April 20, 2019, 11 anarchists were detained during a meeting outside the city. The house where they were stormed by SOBR. Torture was used against activists.

In the fall, criminal cases were opened against a number of anarchists from various groups. At the time of writing, Dmytro Polienko, a former prisoner for 2 years, received three years for home chemistry. Several other anarchists became suspects / accused under various articles.

In conditions when even with minimal actions the security forces incite all their forces to fight the movement, it is very difficult to organize activities. But we are confident that we will be able to improve our methods and develop new effective tactics of struggle.

Epilogue

15 years is a long period. Many events have taken place over the years, we have managed to achieve a lot. This includes successful participation in protests, the organization of a huge number of campaigns, and the holding of ordinary actions. In Belarus, we have launched a file of Interior Ministry officials and manuals of the Lukashenko regime “Gang of Luke”, May Day marches and field camps in Ukraine have become annual. Our movement has become international and recognizable in the political field.

Of course, the activity is complicated by the dictatorship in Belarus and the dominance of the far right in Ukraine. However, in practice we have repeatedly shown that organized effective activity is possible in such conditions.

And yet, this is just the beginning. We still need to make great efforts to achieve our main goal – to destroy the institution of parasitic bureaucrats and build a society based on self-government.

We will keep fighting and we will definitely win!

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